



# Congressman Tim Bishop

*FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK*

## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **HOUSE PASSES DEFENSE BILL WITH BISHOP PROVISION TO PROTECT SOUTHOLD NJROTC**

*Congressman Inserts Measure in Defense Authorization*

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Tim Bishop announced an important victory for the Town of Southold's Naval Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (NJROTC), as he included protective language into the Defense Authorization bill, which passed the House of Representatives yesterday. The language, which if implemented would permanently protect the program, now heads to the Senate.

"I am proud to fight for the cadets and families of the NJROTC program," Bishop said. "This is a program that works, and thanks to this legislation, it will continue to work. Now more than ever, we should be supporting programs that encourage America's young men and women to serve to our country."

For over 30 years, the Town of Southold has operated a NJROTC program with a satellite program in Mattituck and Greenport. This program has earned tremendous support in the community and continues to be successful. For this year's graduating class, eleven cadets in the program have received ROTC scholarships, eight cadets have received nominations for military academies, and five cadets have been selected to an academy. Bishop's initiative was a response to a ruling by the Navy General Counsel's office in 2001 that withdrew support for the operation of NJROTC satellite programs throughout the country, essentially threatening to close Southold's program.

"To lose this program would be tragic," said Mattituck-Cutchogue Superintendent Jim McKenna. "It is a major component for many of these kids and the leadership skills and community service activities it affords are so beneficial to them and to our community."

After enacting a one-year fix for the program in last year's Defense bill, Bishop successfully inserted language into this year's 2008 Defense Authorization Act, which specifically enables the Secretary of the Navy to permanently treat Southold, Mattituck, and Greenport High Schools as a single institution in relation to the NJROTC.

"Every single cadet is there because they want to be there; they are proud to be part of their unit," said Suzanne Conlin, who has two children in the program. "We're thankful to the Congressman for taking this on with us because the kids work so hard on their courses and to give back to the community. It would be a shame to make participating in it more difficult for them."

Last year, Bishop introduced a provision in the Defense Authorization Bill that required a legal review of operating JROTC programs and renewed Mattituck/Southold operations for one year.

“I’m very appreciative of the continuing efforts of the Congressman in getting the federal government to be responsive to local needs,” stated Chris Gallagher, Superintendent of Southold School District. “I believe the Congressman’s perseverance will carry the day.”

At one of Bishop’s town hall meetings in Mattituck last year, concerned North Fork residents submitted a petition with approximately 1,000 signatures requesting the Congressman’s support on behalf of the NJROTC program. Less than a month later, Bishop arranged a meeting at the Pentagon where he hand-delivered the petition to a senior official, and spoke about the merits of preserving the program.

Bishop will now work with his counterparts in the Senate to insert similar language in its version of the Defense Authorization bill.

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